PREFACE

"Input Formats and Specifications of the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) Data Base," commonly called the "Blue Book," is a user's guide for preparing and submitting geodetic data for incorporation into NGS' data base. Survey data that are entered into NGS' data base become part of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS), formerly the National Geodetic Reference System. The guide comprises three volumes. Volume I covers classical horizontal geodetic and Global Positioning System (GPS) data, volume II covers vertical geodetic data, and volume III covers gravity data. Beginning with this edition, the three formerly separate volumes are distributed as a set, since a great deal of information is common to each volume. Because some of the chapters and annexes are identical in all three volumes, the original numbering design has been retained.

The formats and specifications are consistent with the aims of the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circular A-16, as revised in 1990. A major goal of the circular, which is titled "Coordination of Surveying, Mapping, and Related Spatial Data Activities," is to develop a national spatial data infrastructure with the involvement of Federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector. This multilevel national information resource, united by standards and criteria established by the Federal Geodetic Control Subcommittee (FGCS) of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), will enable the sharing and efficient transfer of geospatial data between producers and users.

Survey data that are submitted to NGS for incorporation into NSRS should be properly formatted and supply minimum accuracies of:

- First-order horizontal accuracy standards for GPS and conventional horizontal surveys;
- Second-order, class II vertical accuracy standards for conventional leveling;
- Third-order gravity standards for gravity surveys.

Effective September 1, 1995, survey project data must meet the above minimum accuracy standards to be accepted for inclusion into the NGS data base. Surveys that are of lower order than given above will be accepted only in exceptional cases approved by the Director, NGS.

In addition, these data standards and accuracies must be verified and the survey data contributed for inclusion into the NGS data base must be processed and adjusted by the provider, using currently available NGS software, before submitting the survey project to NGS.

At this time, NGS provides review, archiving, and distribution functions free of charge for survey data submitted in the proper format. These surveys must contain connections to NSRS in accordance with FGCS Standards and Specifications and they must contribute to the public good.

The production of the Blue Book entailed significant contributions from a number of NGS employees. Notable among these are D. Sherrill Snellgrove for his revision of Volume I, originally prepared by then-Commander Ludvik Pfeifer, NOAA (Ret.); Nancy L. Morrison and Commander Pfeifer, for their contributions to preparing Volume II; and then-Lieutenant Warren T. Dewhurst, NOAA, for his preparation of Volume III.

This publication and most of the documents referenced herein may be obtained from:

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